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Secretary

January 31, 2022

The Honorable Michael D. Hurley  
Clerk of the Senate  
State House, Room 335  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Steven T. James  
Clerk of the House  
State House, Room 145  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Hurley and Mr. James:

Please find enclosed the report of the Restorative Justice Advisory Committee. This report is being submitted, pursuant to Section 202 of Chapter 69 of the Acts of 2018. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Peck".

Andrew Peck, Chair of the Restorative Justice Advisory Committee  
Undersecretary for Criminal Justice  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

cc: Governor Charles D. Baker  
Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrence M. Reidy  
Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**Restorative Justice Advisory Committee**  
**Section 202 of Chapter 69 of the Acts of 2018**

# The Restorative Justice Advisory Committee

## 2021 Annual Report



Submitted by: The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

# Report Dedication

## In Memory of Sister Mary T. Quinn SSJ

The members of the RJAC express our deep sadness at the passing of Sister Mary T. Quinn SSJ on November 14, 2021. Mary Quinn dedicated her life to her community pioneering the use of restorative justice practices and principles in Hampden County by founding Community Accountability Restorative Boards, a pathbreaking re-entry program at the Hampden County Correctional facility. Mary was much beloved for her generous spirit, compassionate intelligence, and contagious laugh. The RJAC dedicates this Annual Report for 2021 in her honor.

## Restorative Justice Advisory Committee

<u>Seat</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Appointed By:</u>
Secretary, EOPSS	Undersecretary Andrew Peck	Ex Officio
Secretary, HHS	Scott Taberner	Ex Officio
House of Representatives, Speaker	Representative Sean Garballey	Legislature
Senate, Senate President	Senator Jamie Eldridge	Legislature
President, MA District Attorney's Association	ADA Becky Michaels	Ex Officio
Chief Counsel, Committee for Public Counsel Services	Atty. Allison S. Cartwright	Ex Officio
Commissioner of Probation	John Millett until June 2021 Currently Vacant	Ex Officio
President, MA Chiefs of Police Association	Chief Fred Ryan	Ex Officio
Executive Director, MOVA	Diane Coffey	Ex Officio
MA Sheriff's Association	Mary Quinn until October 2021 Currently Vacant	Ex Officio
Retired Trial Court Judge	Hon. Rosemary Minehan (ret.)	Governor
Restorative Justice	Erin Freeborn	Governor
Restorative Justice	Cheis Garrus until October 2021 Currently Vacant	Governor
Restorative Justice	Irene 'Strong Oak' Lefebvre	Governor
Restorative Justice	Susan Jeghelian	Governor
Restorative Justice	Kara Hayes	Governor
Restorative Justice	Carolyn Boyes-Watson	Governor



# The Creation and Purpose of the Restorative Justice Advisory Committee:

The Restorative Justice Advisory Committee (hereinafter "RJAC" or "the Committee") was established by Section 202 of Chapter 69 of the Acts of 2018, An Act Relative to Criminal Justice Reform (hereinafter "*The Criminal Justice Reform Act*").

## Pursuant to the Criminal Justice Reform Act:

The advisory committee shall consist of 17 members: 1 of whom shall be: the secretary of public safety and security or a designee who shall serve as chair; 1 of whom shall be the secretary of health and human services or a designee; 1 of whom shall be a member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker; 1 of whom shall be a member of the senate appointed by the senate president; 1 of whom shall be; the president of the Massachusetts district attorneys association, or a designee; 1 of whom shall be the chief counsel of the committee for public counsel services or a designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of probation or a designee; 1 of whom shall be the president of the Massachusetts chiefs of police association, or a de-signee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the Massachusetts office for victim assistance or a designee; 1 of whom shall be the executive director of the Massachusetts sheriff's association, or a designee; and 7 of whom shall be appointed by the governor, 1 of whom shall be a retired trial court judge and 6 of whom shall be representatives of community-based restorative justice programs or a member of the public with expertise in restorative justice. Each member of the advisory committee shall serve a 6-year term.

## Section 202 of the Criminal Justice Reform Act charges the RJAC with the following obligations:

The advisory committee may monitor and assist all community-based restorative justice programs to which a juvenile or adult defendant may be diverted pursuant to this chapter.

The advisory committee shall track the use of community-based restorative justice programs through a partnership with an educational institution and may make legislative, policy and regulatory recommendations to aid in the use of community-based restorative justice programs including, but not limited to: (i) qualitative and quantitative outcomes for participants; (ii) recidivism rates of responsible parties; (iii) criteria for youth involvement and training; (iv) cost savings for the commonwealth; (v) training guidelines for restorative justice facilitators; (vi) data on gender, racial socioeconomic and geographic disparities in the use of community-based restorative justice programs; (vii) guidelines for restorative justice best practices; and (viii) appropriate training for community-based restorative programs.

The advisory committee shall annually, not later than December 31, submit a report with findings and recommendations to the governor, the clerks of the house of

representatives and senate and the house and senate chairs of the joint committees on the judiciary and public safety and homeland security.

## Introduction: Year-In-Review

The RJAC continued its work without pause in 2021 despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Utilizing live video, RJAC held monthly open public meetings in accordance with its mandate and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Additionally, RJAC subcommittees met regularly via live video as needed to further goals and objectives set by its members. A more detailed accounting of the subcommittees can be found in the following sections of this Annual Report.

On January 6, 2021, as this nation set to transition the presidency, armed crowds stormed the U.S. Capitol causing serious bodily injury and destroying property. In addition to these efforts to unseat democracy, other groups continued to protest racial injustice and demand police reform in this country. The people of Massachusetts were not immune from these actions. This is the backdrop that RJAC was aware of as it entered 2021 and held its first meeting on January 12th. The year was also witness to the trial and conviction of the police officer who murdered George Floyd in Minnesota; the trial and acquittal of the man who killed Anthony Huber and Joseph Rosenbaum and injured Gaige Grosskreutz in Wisconsin; and the trial and convictions of the three men who killed Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia. These and other acts of harm evidence the urgent need for restorative justice in this country and in this state.

In summary, the 2021 year was informed by a need to address the inequities and disparities of the current criminal legal system, and the need to promote voices of community and victims within legal and other systems through principles of restorative justice. Meetings were highlighted with presentations by experts, practitioners, and incarcerated individuals who shared their time and talent with RJAC and its public audience. The presentations for this year were as follows:

1. The Leadership Team/The Restorative Justice Program of MCI Norfolk (April 2021)
2. Presentation by Christian Ruuska, Director of Victim Services at DOC "Restorative Justice Initiatives at Department of Correction in MA" (September 2021)

The common thread in RJAC's work throughout the year was that research into restorative justice principles, training, and implementation has proven that it can bring healing and health to victims, communities, and systems that have been harmed or have caused harm.

As with any mission-driven group, the RJAC is forward thinking in setting and meeting its goals and objectives. Toward this end, RJAC undertook an assessment of what members envision for



the future now that RJAC finds itself at the midpoint of its commission. This assessment serves as a powerful tool in focusing RJAC on further defining and clarifying a mission, noting concerns, and forging a path forward. This is discussed in-depth under the Mission and Looking Forward sections of this Annual Report.

Despite its best efforts, the pandemic contributed to minor setbacks for the Committee. While RJAC was making progress in its request for funding for conducting an inventory of statewide restorative justice programs and establishing a partnership with a higher education institution to track restorative justice work in the Commonwealth, the budgetary and legislative needs created by the pandemic placed this on hold. As the state has pivoted from the initial throes of the pandemic, securing funding continued to be a top priority of RJAC and fortunately funding was secured late in the year through ARPA legislation (see below). Another priority for the RJAC is filling vacant seats and expanding to include other residents as voting members to intentionally increase diversity of thought and experience in our work and actions (see below).

RJAC is confident that it can meet the moment and make substantial progress toward completing its legislative mandate by 2024. The Committee is committed to bringing restorative justice programming and practices to the people of Massachusetts. Accomplishing this goal is within reach due to the relationships RJAC has with the Executive, Judicial and Legislative branches.

## Planning Subcommittee

1. Chair-Becky Michaels
2. Erin Freeborn
3. Strong Oak Lefebvre
4. Mary Quinn

The Planning Subcommittee was created to enable the RJAC to define its role, approach, and priorities and make recommendations to the whole Committee. The Subcommittee held five meetings from February to June 2021 via remote technology and open to members of the public.

At the first meeting, the Subcommittee unanimously decided to conduct all meetings in circle format and to include all members of the public to participate in the circle so that the voices of diverse members of the community could contribute to the meetings in meaningful ways. These two process decisions highlighted an important purpose of the Planning Subcommittee, which was to hear the voices of non-RJAC community members and ensure that their opinions and experiences were considered as the Subcommittee made its recommendations. Several circles were held that enabled open conversations and allowed members of the public to speak frankly, including at times sharing concerns about the RJAC process.

The Subcommittee worked on reviewing at length the memo shared with the RJAC by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Susan Jeghelian that proposed formation of the Planning Subcommittee as a vehicle for clarifying the RJAC role, purpose, and approach to its work.<sup>1</sup>

In July, the Planning Subcommittee presented the following recommendations to the RJAC:

- 1) to increase the diversity of decisionmakers at the RJAC table, particularly ensuring that the RJAC includes the voices of those most impacted by the restorative justice process itself: survivors, returning citizens, and practitioners.
- 2) to ensure that the RJAC serves in an advisory capacity for community organizations, and not as a monitor or regulator.
- 3) to establish a mission and vision for the RJAC from both short and long-term perspectives.
- 4) to compile a comprehensive list of current resources through the RJAC survey and to make those resources available to practitioners, serving in a networking capacity for the restorative justice community and possibly organizing a statewide conference.
- 5) to create ways to educate the public about restorative justice always through a racial justice lens.
- 6) to secure a sustainable funding source for the work of the RJAC and beyond.

## Questionnaire Subcommittee

1. Chair-Kara Hayes
2. Carolyn Boyes-Watson
3. Strong Oak Lefebvre
4. Hon. Rosemary Minehan (ret.)

The Questionnaire Subcommittee was tasked with administering the RJAC's survey of Massachusetts restorative justice programs that would help to create an inventory for the RJAC of extant programming in Massachusetts. The Subcommittee held four meetings from February to August 2021 via remote technology and open to members of the public.

The work of the Questionnaire Subcommittee has included survey design and distribution, and the design of follow-up interviews. The distribution of the study is designed to capture the feedback of the broadest population possible and involves continued survey sharing to expand the sample size of the final process of capturing community practitioners working in the field. The survey process has been deepening the RJAC's knowledge of restorative work in Massachusetts while widening the public attendance at RJAC public meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> Memo dated April 3, 2019: Request for Subcommittee Name and Description



The Questionnaire Subcommittee's work (wider survey distribution, publicizing the subcommittee's public meetings within the committee member's networks, and follow-up interviews with responders) is allowing the full committee to reach more members of the community of restorative practitioners in Massachusetts. The process is also educating practitioners on the work of RJAC and engaging more practitioners into the RJAC meetings and subcommittees while deepening the Committee's collective understanding of the landscape of services in the state.

The Questionnaire Subcommittee is currently interviewing survey respondents who expressed a willingness to discuss their work in interviews with RJAC members by phone. With the input of public meeting attendees, the Subcommittee identified the following interview questions:

1. What is your work about? (Meant to deepen the info we already have which is limited by the nature of survey design)
2. What barriers are you facing in your work?
3. If there were no obstacles, what would you do with your work?
4. What would be helpful to you?
5. Who else should we talk to?
6. What are your concerns about state involvement/state control of RJ processes?
7. How do you incorporate racial and gender equity into your work?
8. How do you center survivors in your process?

Interviews are serving as a listening project meant to engage a cross-section of restorative justice practitioners who represent different demographics: urban, rural systemic, and community-driven programming. Engaging the wisdom of diverse practitioners from indigenous settings, community-based settings, schools, and other educational environments and those working in legal systems and law enforcement will help the RJAC to understand the successes and challenges of restorative justice work through the lens of practitioners. The intention is to get a feel for the landscape of restorative justice in the state, take the pulse of where it is now as a movement and create a shared road map for the future on how to resource and build restorative justice practice. This undertaking is not expected to document every practitioner in the state as that is a task much greater than the Subcommittee alone can undertake. The current process is connected to the initial RJAC survey of practitioners and is, in that way, a self-selecting group representing only a cross-section of the restorative justice work being done.

The Questionnaire Subcommittee hopes to expand the process and reach deeper into the community of practitioners for this interview process in the coming year. The interviews are expected to conclude in early 2022, after which the Subcommittee will reflect on what it has heard and share back to the RJAC and larger restorative justice community with the hopes of deepening collective knowledge and work. The Questionnaire Subcommittee recommendations for the coming year include the following:

1. A larger audience of survey respondents is needed and adding more interviews to the ongoing survey process is important to expand the RJAC's knowledge of restorative work in the state. The involvement of practitioners in the survey process should continue and potentially interested parties who did not respond to the survey should also be asked to answer the interview questions to expand the RJAC knowledge base.
2. The survey should be resent to all Victim Witness Assistance Programs in District Attorney's Offices. Since prosecutorial discretion impacts many if not all diversion decisions, their knowledge of restorative justice processes is critical for the RJAC to assess, which is especially important given the diversion driven language in the governing statute.

## Mission, Vision, Values & Principles

RJAC members were asked to write a brief statement of what they would like to see as the RJAC's mission. An ad hoc subcommittee (Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Erin Freeborn) organized the responses of thirteen members into the following broad areas of consensus and common themes upon which the full Committee deliberated and thereafter adopted the following mission, vision, values, and guiding principles:

### *Areas of consensus:*

- RJAC serves an advisory not regulatory function
- There is a strong desire to expand RJ across the Commonwealth in many sectors including criminal-legal system; schools; and community
- The role of the RJAC is educational/promotion/support/advocacy
- Further legislation to support RJ in the Commonwealth is necessary
- The Commonwealth needs an office with funding and staff to support growth of RJ
- There is a desire to expand the membership and diversity on the current RJAC

### *Common Themes*

1. Funding / Resources – RJAC serve as a resource by assisting with RJ programs, funding, partnerships, capacity-building
2. Office / Infrastructure
3. Training
4. Guidelines / Best Practices / Recommendations / Reports
5. Diversity of perspectives / Engage more voices / Expand RJAC membership
6. Education / Promotion of RJ / Conference

### *Broad Categories:*



- A. What the RJAC, as it is constituted currently, can and should accomplish
- B. Creation of a future funded entity within the Commonwealth to promote RJ

## Mission

Promote and expand restorative justice education, practices, and programming statewide in collaboration with practitioners, participants, sponsors, stakeholders, and the general public, for the purpose of fostering healing for people and communities impacted by harm and systemic/structural violence and with an aim towards promoting public safety and accountability.

## Vision

A Commonwealth where community accountability for harm is based on healing and not on retribution, and where effective restorative practices are embedded within schools, public institutions and communities and supported by public policy, programming, funding, and infrastructure.

## Values

- Victim-centered
- Trauma-informed
- Public safety-oriented
- Accountability and healing for all
- Meaningful dialogue

## Guiding Principles

*Integrate Voices of Community and Victims of Crime into the Legal Process:* Support the creation and expansion of restorative practice within the legal system. This requires a deep awareness of the people impacted by the law- not just those charged with a crime but the needs of victims and impacted communities. This is particularly true with criminal law where outcome is often divorced from the “lived experience” of all parties.

*Promote Restorative Responses and Diversity of RJ Programming:* Recognize that grassroots organizations in Massachusetts should have more capacity to implement responses to conflict that heal, listen to the needs of victims, and create personal growth and accountability for offenders. Provide a mechanism for restorative justice practitioners in the area to connect, collaborate, and share best practices. There should not be a monopoly by any one program in the state and the Committee should commit to developing a robust base of programming that is reflecting of lived experience, language equity and diverse voices.

*Facilitate Opportunity for Equitable Training Opportunities:* Bridge the socioeconomic and language access gaps in restorative justice practice within Massachusetts. Ensure that training and access to resources is afforded to everyone regardless of ability to pay or location of training and help to make this modality accessible outside of the suburban/White spaces it has flourished in (due to the expenses of programming and training).

*Create Guidelines for Safe and Responsible Restorative Practices:* Create guidelines of practice for facilitation of restorative justice programming that support diversity of community-based practice while offering guidelines on participation, impartiality, conflicts of interest, use of victim surrogates, facilitator competence, safety, confidentiality, and quality of the process.

*Support a Cultural Shift:* Engage in this process in the hopes of generating ideas, collaborations and relationships that can give birth to restorative solutions for our neighbors and for systems. Lean on and learn from each other as people who have a commitment to restorative options for victims and offenders, and community engagement in the aftermath of harm.

## Committee Expansion & Funding

The RJAC is working to fill vacant slots and to expand its membership. Expansion is needed to broaden the Committee's perspective, increase capacity, and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly the voices and experiences of currently or recently incarcerated individuals and individuals from black and indigenous communities.

The RJAC through its member, Senator James Eldridge, is seeking an amendment to its statute via an outside section of the FY 2023 state budget to increase the number of restorative justice representative slots on the RJAC by an additional three to six members. This would double the number of community slots to enable the appointment of people who have been harmed, victims of crime/violence, currently incarcerated individuals, people recently experiencing reentry, and people completing RJ processes as responsible or impacted parties.

On December 13, 2021, Governor Baker signed legislation passed by the MA Legislature to enable spending of federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) which included \$80,000 for the RJAC to conduct its study of community-based restorative justice programs in partnership with a higher education institution. This funding will enable the survey and interview processes launched by the RJAC Questionnaire Subcommittee to continue and be completed in 2022.

## Conclusion: Looking Forward



The RJAC has three main focus areas for the remaining three years of its term: completing an inventory of community based of restorative programs, raising awareness of and increasing restorative justice practices with the Commonwealth, and making recommendations to policymakers for establishing and funding restorative justice infrastructure and programming in schools, public institutions and communities. The Committee will continue to explore partnering with higher education institutions to support this work. The Committee will be seeking another six-year term if needed to accomplish these priorities.

**Inventorying:** The Committee will continue its efforts to create an inventory of restorative justice programs through surveys and interviews for the purpose of assessing the state of restorative justice practice within the Commonwealth and identifying the needs of the restorative justice practitioner community. This inventory will enable the RJAC to start tracking restorative justice activities in the state in partnership with a higher education institution and evaluating program models for potential public funding and replication. The inventory will also serve as a resource for increasing access to restorative justice programs and practitioners for courts, public agencies, individuals, and communities within the state.

**Educating:** The RJAC will continue efforts to learn about restorative justice practices in the Commonwealth and may expand to learning about restorative justice systems in other states and countries. Additionally, the Committee plans to adopt several approaches to engaging practitioners and the general public for the purpose of increasing awareness, understanding, and best practices. These initiatives may include convening statewide conferences to present examples of the work being done and invite ideas and directions for new programs, commissioning or issuing public reports highlighting research and evaluation data supporting restorative justice models, and conducting seminars/workshops to educate legislators, courts, and state agencies about restorative justice and its potential.

**Recommending:** The education- and inventory-related activities of the RJAC will culminate in a set of recommendations developed collaboratively with stakeholders to strengthen community-based and publicly sponsored restorative justice programs in the state. These recommendations will be addressed to policymakers, funders, public officials, and public institutions (courts, corrections, law enforcement, schools) and cover how to build restorative justice programs and integrate restorative practices into their missions. Recommendations will call for legislation to create more opportunities for restorative justice programs and remove barriers to access and effective implementation (such as mandatory reporting). They are also expected to provide guidelines for assuring quality and accountability in the public programs; best practices and criteria/standards for training practitioners and selecting and assessing community-based restorative justice programs for delivery of services; frameworks for community outreach and prevention work; guidance for investment of public funding and resources in restorative justice, and obtaining grants for community-based restorative justice initiatives.

Importantly, the RJAC expects to recommend the establishment and annual funding of a statutory state restorative justice agency/office under the leadership of an Executive Director to serve as a knowledge-based resource and clearinghouse, administrative and funding agency, and mechanism to develop programming and conduct capacity building and research. In the spirit of justice reinvestment, this office and the restorative justice grants it administers would be funded by resources saved from reduced incarceration rates to be invested in justice alternatives, including restorative justice practices. The office would play a pivotal role in securing buy-in by the criminal justice system; identifying and mobilizing community assets; and redressing the structural harms inflicted by the traditional justice system.

## Annual Report Subcommittee

1. Chair-Allison S. Cartwright
2. Kara Hayes
3. Susan Jeghelian
4. Irene 'Strong Oak' Lefebvre



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Restorative Justice Advisory Committee (RJAC)

**FR:** Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Susan Jeghelian, RJAC Members

**DT:** April 3, 2019

**RE:** Request for Subcommittee Name and Description

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This memo responds to the RJAC request at the March Meeting for us to confer and report back on the name and description of a Subcommittee to figure out how best to partner with a higher education institution to assist the RJAC in carrying out its statutory responsibilities.

We have concluded that this Subcommittee could help the RJAC in the following ways:

1. clarify the role of the RJAC as advisory not regulatory;
2. determine the areas where RJAC advice would be the most useful and highly leveraged;
3. ascertain the information the RJAC needs to address those areas effectively; and
4. scope the RFP for the higher education institution to assist in compiling that information, including creating an inventory of MA community-based RJ programs.

The following are some preliminary thoughts and questions we have on each of these to share with the RJAC and spark further discussion.

### A. Name

We are *tentatively* proposing we call this the "Planning Subcommittee". This name could help distinguish the focus of this Subcommittee in on developing the plan for scoping the work for the higher education consultant rather than doing the work ourselves, and it could also help distinguish the purpose of this Subcommittee from other Subcommittees that may be organized to undertake tasks and functions of the RJAC. Reviewing and discussing the below description of the Subcommittee may help the RJAC to answer the following question:

***Are there any other names for this Subcommittee that would be suitable?***

### B. Description

The purpose of this Subcommittee could be to help the RJAC clarify its advisory role and figure out where best to concentrate its work so that the RJAC advice would be the most influential in how people think about and deploy RJ for the benefit of Massachusetts citizens and institutions. This Subcommittee could assist the RJAC in identifying the type of information and resources that the RJAC needs in order to address priority areas effectively, and then scope the RFP for the higher education institution to assist in compiling that information.

***Are there other ways to define this Subcommittee's work?***

Here are some further thoughts and questions for the RJAC to consider:

## 1. Role

A review of the statutory language makes it clear that the RJAC role is to be “advisory” not regulatory. This is particularly important given where the state of the restorative justice field is right now – still emerging, needing to raise awareness broadly, deepening understanding of restorative justice best practices, studying evidence-based impacts and seeking to shift the focus from criminal justice outcomes to “restorative” outcomes. For example, such a shift would mean assessing outcomes on victim satisfaction, community participation and sense of procedural fairness for responsible parties. These are typical outcomes for a restorative process rather than a criminal justice process.

Our reading of the statute suggests that the RJAC’s charge is to advise policy-makers, public officials and public institutions (the courts, DYS, DCF, DMH, law enforcement, public schools) who refer individuals to restorative justice programs and practitioners. The advice provided could be in the form recommended guidelines for the purpose of assuring quality and accountability in the public institutions that use restorative justice for a variety of purposes including but not limited to juvenile and adult diversion, and post-disposition and reentry support. The guidelines would highlight the best practices, criteria and standards to guide selection of community-based RJ programs for diversion and other initiatives and guide decisions to invest public funding and resources in them. As the RJAC considers its role, it may want to take up the following questions for discussion:

***What is the best way to describe the advisory role of the RJAC?***

***Are we cheerleaders for restorative justice? Does the RJAC have an educative function as well as an advisory function?***

## 2. Priority Areas

We are concerned that some of the itemized statutory tasks such as tracking impact of restorative justice on recidivism rates should not be placed on community-based restorative justice programs who would not have access to data or resources to be able to do. This is a task more appropriately charged to system holders, who have access to comparative data (matched samples/randomization) to do such an analysis. Similarly, the assessing and tracking of cost savings for the commonwealth and of data on racial/gender/social/geographical disparities in how restorative justice is used should be charged to system holders who are the source of referrals to community-based RJ programs.

Of the itemized statutory tasks, the RJAC may best be able to help in the following areas: figuring out what data community-based restorative justice programs regularly gather and should gather from restorative justice participants; developing training guidelines for restorative justice facilitators, setting guidelines for restorative justice best practices and guidelines for appropriate training for community-based restorative justice programs. Here are some further questions for discussion and consideration:



***How can the work of the RJAC bring restorative justice forward in a supportive way?***

***Will establishing guidelines for the system holders help them to equitably and responsibly utilize restorative justice?***

### **3. Information and Resources**

This Subcommittee would help the RJAC figure out the information it needs to know based on its statutory charge, and to support the work in its priority areas. This would also include helping the RJAC keep focus on restorative justice in the criminal justice system, not in the education system for example, so that the RJAC work would not impact school-based restorative justice programs for team-building and conflict resolution purposes, but would cover court, school, police department and District Attorney referrals, and relevant state agency referrals such as referrals from DYS.

***What information and resources does the RJAC need?***

***Will the RJAC want to collect information from restorative justice practitioners and scholars in MA in understanding existing programs and creating guidelines?***

***Will the RJAC want to understand the effectiveness of restorative justice training, facilitation and programming guidelines in other jurisdictions?***

### **4. Higher Education institution Partner**

The scope of work for the RFP with the higher education institution would focus on assisting the RJAC with obtaining the necessary information to carry out the tasks that RJAC believes to be the most influential or highly leveraged. This could include compiling an inventory of community-based restorative justice programs (and experienced/trained restorative justice practitioners) in MA that are prepared to take cases referred from the criminal justice system.

We would also suggest that this inventory go beyond this narrow scope to include restorative justice programs within and connected to public institutions in MA. This would give the RJAC a sense of what is out there for instance, programs such as Community Accountability Boards for pre-release in Hamden County; or victim-offender dialogue inside the Department of Correctional facilities as a part of victim services. The inventory could also identify restorative justice education and training programs in MA such as the new certificate program being launched at Suffolk University in 2020. Further discussion will be helpful on:

***How best can a partner higher education institution assist the RJAC with obtaining information and resources?***

In sum, with further clarity and agreement among RJAC members on its role and focus areas, and armed with relevant information on what is going on in MA and best practices in the field, the RJAC would be in a position to effectively advise policy-makers and public institutions how to responsibly use community-based restorative justice programs and build capacity and public accountability mechanisms for informed investment and expansion.